The Chief and His Household

Modern improvements have not been carried so far among them as to furnish the convenience of bells, such as are used to call waiters in our fashionable hotels, but as a substitute mine host of the wigwam had tied a deerskin cord to the corner of each of his wive's buffalo mattresses, the other end extending under the canvas into his own tent, thus rendering only a slight twitch necessary to communicate intelligence their presence was required. It was their duty to attend him, come at his call and go at his bidding, standing towards him as much in the relation of slaves as of wives.

He was the civil chief as distinguished from the war chief, and consequently the head of the tribe. This dignity carried with it the privilege of possessing four wives, a common Indian being allowed to have but one, subordinate officers two, and the war chief three. His name was Osolo, which, translated into Anglo Saxon, signifies "the Big Wolf." He had eight children, four of whom still remained in their mothers' tents, two had grown to manhood and taken wives to themselves, while two daughters had likewise left the paternal wigwam for the matrimonial lodge.

I had an opportunity now of observing their manner of preparing and partaking breakfast, which certainly was not attended with an extraordinary ceremony or display. Outside the tent, in front of the door, two logs lay side by side. Between them the fire was kindled. A long slice of horseflesh was attached to the end of a stick, some four feet in length, by which the meat was held over the fire, and when barely warmed through was brought into the tent, the handle end of the stick thrust into the ground, the long slice dangling from the other end, resembling a drooping blood-red flag. Kiln-dried corn was next boiled and mashed and served in a large dish made of bark. Breakfast was then

2: Lee T-5 (1855-1858) 1957
NO6 Comanche NO6

ing upon them, slaughtering and slaying until they whined 727
for mercy, like their own vile curs.

Indulging such moods as these, I was one day unbound and ordered to perform some menial office. Previously, however, I had determined in my heart to kill at least one or more of them the first opportunity that offered, partly to gratify my vengeance, but more especially actuated by the hope that in the melee, prompted by sudden wrath, they would dispatch me at once and save me from a lingering death at the stake. When, therefore, the cords were unfastened and I stood erect with free limbs, instead of obeying the command, I seized the first thing within my reach, [415] which happened to be a wooden pothook, and hurled it at an Indian with all my strength. Well was it for him [522] that it missed its aim. Instantly I was surrounded and borne down, but instead of producing the effect intended, the unexpected assault convulsed them with laughter. The next day, and the next, and every few days thereafter, I was unloosed and directed to skin a deer, or bring wood or water, they taking special care, in the meantime, to keep all dangerous weapons out of my reach and a sufficient number about me to prevent serious mischief. But I refused, absolutely and defiantly. On occasions, also, at this period, when the watch was brought out, I would not touch it. The life I was leading had become so inconceivably irksome—they were such a filthy and cruel race—the disgusting camp so "smelled to heaven"—everything about me was so hopeless and so wretched that I became utterly reckless, longing only to shake off, I cared not how, at length, the heavy nightmare of existence. If, therefore, I had previously feigned the character of a humble and devout missionary with some degree of success, I now played the part of an obstinate jackass to absolute perfection. [515 364]

2: Lee T-5 (1855-1858) 1957
NO6 Comanche NO6

covered and undisturbed where I had left him. Accordingly, I gathered a pile of sticks, and withdrawing the charge from the rifle, ignited a priming of powder which presently resulted in a ruddy, and under other circumstances, a cheerful blaze. The mule meat was then broiled, and satisfying present appetite upon a portion, the remainder was carefully laid aside for future necessity. Thus provided with provisions for several days to come, it occurred to me that I might suffer for the lack of water on those thirsty mountains. The buffalo horn, though convenient at a stream or spring, could not be used in carrying away their contents. Some kind of vessel was indispensable, and in order to be furnished with such an article, I cut the bladder from the mule, blew it up, dried it by the fire, filled it from a sluggish pool at hand, tying the mouth with a strong buffalo string.

These labors performed, with the reloaded rifle in my hands, I sat down on the buffalo skin at the foot of a cedar tree and leaned against its trunk. Here, a new terror awaited me I had not anticipated. The mule's blood had been scented by wild beasts, wolves and panthers, which began to scream. Nearer and nearer they approached until the horse snuffed and snorted, and I could hear their teeth snap, and the dry sticks crackle beneath their feet. A dozen times I was on the point of ascending the tree, momentarily expecting to be attacked. With such a crash would they break through the thicket that many times I bounded to my feet, thinking the Indians were upon me. It was a fearful night, and the most fearful sound that has ever fallen on my ears is the scream of the panther, so like is it to the plaintive, agonizing shriek of a human being. The fortunate resolution I had taken to build a fire undoubtedly kept them off, and the absence of Indians beyond the sound of their unearthly confusion was the sole cause of my hiding

brought forth a miserable-looking pony with a three-inch coat of thick hair and a general appearance of neglect and suffering. Its rider "looked big enough to carry the poor beast on his shoulders" and was armed with a club with which he belabored the animal from starting line to the finish. Yet, to the surprise of the whites the Indian pony managed to win by a neck. Within an hour the officers bit again and lost by a nose. Then they suggested a third race and brought out a magnificent Kentucky racing mare. In a frenzy of excitement the Indians bet everything that the whites would take. With the starting signal the Indian rider threw away his club, gave a whoop, and his little mount "went away like the wind." That Kentucky mare was soon so far behind that for the last fifty yards the Comanche sat backwards on his pony beckoning to the white rider to come on. The whites afterwards learned that the shaggy pony was a celebrated racer, and that the Comanches had just come back from fleecing the Kickapoos to the tune of six hundred ponies with that same little horse.[32]

Straight-run relay races from a standing start for a distance "ten times the distance you can shoot an arrow," or a good two miles, made a favorite run. Shorter obstacle races put both speed and control to a rigorous test.

To the Comanche, then, the horse was an intimate household friend, a beast of burden, a counter in the great prestige game of the warriors, a "gamer," and an occasional source of food. But it was to the buffalo that he turned for his economic mainstay.

The buffalo was as indispensable to the Comanche as the horse. No part of the slaughtered animal was wasted except the rump, spine, and skull. Hair, skin, flesh, blood, bones, entrails, horns, sinews, kidneys, liver, paunch, and the dried excrement were all utilized. The Indian ate its flesh, the marrow of its bones, the contents of the gall bladder on raw liver, and even at times its entrails—a habit left over from Shoshone days. Of the edible parts, only the heart was unconsumed; it was left for magical perpetuation of the herds.

When the Comanche was thirsty and water was not available, there was the blood of the buffalo. Its paunch, after the inner lining was removed, was used as a water bag and also as a container in which

[32] R. I. Dodge, *The Plains of the Great West*, 329–30.

3:Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

to cook stone-boiled soup. The dried excrement (chips) of the buffalo burned slowly and made a hot and lasting fire for both warmth and cooking; it was sometimes used ceremoniously as a support to keep some sacred object from touching the ground, and it was so endowed with power that scouts swore their oaths of veracity on a pile of buffalo chips. The bones, hoofs, and horns of the buffalo were fashioned into cups, spoons, and ornaments; and the horns were occasionally fashioned into bows or worn on headdresses on special occasions. Sinews from the back made bow strings and thread. Ropes were made from the twisted hair. The hide was used to manufacture clothing, lodge coverings, thongs, saddles, bridles, and bags. When properly finished with the fine coat of wool and the hair left on it, it provided an unusually warm robe. Freed from the hair and dressed, it constituted a summer blanket. A green hide served for a pot before the white traders brought kettles, and braided strands of rawhide provided an excellent rope.

There was a time, according to Comanche legend, when the Indians did not have access to the buffalo. In the version recorded fifty years ago by H. H. St.Clair, Coyote effected their release by a ruse.[33] In a hitherto unpublished version given by That's It in 1933 it was *Ka:wus,* the Culture Hero, who turned the trick.

« « « Our knowledge only goes to the point where man and the earth were already here.

The People were out playing three kinds of games one day—the wheel game, throwing arrows, and shooting with the bow. A strange man came amongst them. He talked to no one. Just stood there looking on with a quiver over his shoulder.

After a while he said, "I'll go over there to defecate." He laid down his quiver and jumped in a creek. While he was down there, a young man went up and looked in his bag. There was a nice piece of fat in it. He took it up and showed it to the other Indians. They all wondered where that old man came from. "He certainly has plenty of meat," they all said.

Then they all plotted to stop playing at meal time. They left the

[33] H. H. St. Clair, "Shoshone and Comanche Tales," *Journal of American Folk-Lore,* No. 85 (July–September, 1909), 280–81.

and easy to wear. Although there were variations to suit the individual taste and needs, the general pattern remained fairly uniform. A Comanche woman in motion was a graceful sight, with the gorgeous fringes swaying with every movement and the brilliant patterns of beading glittering in the sunlight or firelight.

The woman wore her hair cropped and traced the part line with vermilion, although she seldom went to the trouble of combing or otherwise caring for her hair; it just hung loose. The care that did not go into her hair was devoted to facial make-up. Her eyes were accentuated with red or yellow lines above and below the lids and sometimes crossing at the corners. Her ears were painted red inside, and both cheeks were daubed with a solid red-orange circle or triangle. She also occasionally tattooed her face and breast, and wore bracelets and necklaces. As a parallel to the strong institutional friendship between two men, two Comanche women friends might dress alike.

Little girls, unlike small boys, always wore some form of clothing. A girl wore a breechclout until near the age of puberty, when she donned the buckskin dress. She wore her hair long and in plaits.

Fine clothes were so prized for dressing up that each Comanche had a wardrobe case made of rawhide, called *nat'sakɜna*. It was envelope-shaped, laced together at the edges, and had a tie-down, fold-over flap. Thus it was different from the parfleche, or *ɔyɔ:t*, as the Comanche called the meat bag. In his case he kept his best suit, his leggings, moccasins, blanket, and braid wrappers. It was up to his mother to care for his wardrobe.

If he had a war bonnet or feathers, they were kept separately in a tubular bag, called *tunawɔs*, that could be slung from his waist as he rode his horse, so that they could be ready for instant donning in case of attack. In this bag was also carried war paint, a brush, and a mirror after mirrors became available. If the occasion arose, a Comanche wanted to look his best.

Home to the Comanche was his tipi, or conical skin dwelling. It represented a wonderful combination of utility and portability, for it could be raised or lowered within minutes. It was constructed of tanned buffalo hides sewed together and stretched, flesh side out, over a conical framework of from twelve to thirty poles. The standard number in the opinion of modern Comanches was twenty-two poles.

for use during winter and spring. Other bags contained ornaments, wooden bowls, dishes, small horn spoons, extra clothing, personal belongings, and any odds and ends. In fact, the contents of a parfleche were a perpetual surprise. It might contain anything from a tooth to a gold coin.

No tipi furnishings were complete without a supply of utensils or receptacles. They, too, were adapted to the environment and the mobile habits of the owner. No pottery was made or used, simply because it could not be conveniently handled and because more practical materials were at hand. Receptacles for carrying water during travel where water holes were far apart, as was usually the case in Comanche country, needed to be light and to pack well. The paunch of the buffalo met both requirements; therefore, before the introduction of the kettle it served well. A green paunch was hung from a limb or pole and hot stones held inside until the water boiled. Water vessels were also made from "cased" deer skins, that is, skins removed whole. The legs and necks were tied tightly with sinews. Buckets or cups could be made by tying one end of the skin of a leg and fitting a small rod around the inside of the other end. Drinking cups were made from buffalo horns and terrapin shells. A few wooden spoons and bowls were used. They were worked into shape by burning, scraping, and polishing. The Comanches, however, were little interested in this type of receptacle since it was more of a burden than an advantage in their way of life. Consequently, the workmanship was primitive. A very few crude baskets, knives of stone and bone (of metal after contact with the whites), mauls, a digging stick or two, and a few bone needles completed the tipi furnishings.

5: Carlson & Jones E, N-4, 5 (1933)1939
NO6 Comanche NO6

824 *tuberosus*), but some other plant might fit the description equally well.
262 Hoebel (10) records three Shoshone food plants the names of which suggest a relationship to the Comanche *paiyap*. The first of these (Shoshone: *yep* or *muhaiyep*) has a single "root," grows in the hills, and is harvested in early March. The second (Shoshone: *ṭimbiyep*, that is, "rock *yep*") grows in rocky outcrops. It is of interest to note here that Chamberlain (6, p. 46) gives the Gosiute term *tiṅ-bo-ip* (rock + root + plant) for plants growing over rocks. The third has the Shoshone name *piayep*, meaning "big *yep*," which appears to be the Shoshone equivalent of the Comanche *paiyap;* it is described as having several large tubers.

824 The pod of the mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*) contains a con-
252 siderable amount of gummy saccharine material, of which a number
263 of analyses have been made. One of the more recent shows the beans to contain about twenty per cent sugar (28, p. 656). The Comanche
● [415] crushed them in a mortar made of buffalo hide, using a pestle of mesquite wood. After the beans were crushed, the seeds were removed and the pods pounded to a fine meal, which was used alone or added to corn meal as a sweetening. A mush was prepared by
[272] mixing mesquite meal with marrow, and a drink (Comanche: *pihi-sawanap*) was made by combining mesquite meal and corn meal in water. Whether or not this drink was allowed to ferment is not mentioned in the notes. The Comanche preparation and uses of
[170] the mesquite beans are almost identical with those of the Apache and the tribes of the Gila region of Arizona (3, pp. 43–44; 4, pp. 41, 53), where the mesquite was a staple food. Among these tribes a fermented beverage was prepared from the mesquite alone or from a mixture of mesquite and corn meal.

824 In times of scarcity the acorns of the blackjack oak (*Quercus*
261 *marilandica*) were eaten. They were shelled and boiled, and might
171 be stored for future use. The Comanche, unlike many other tribes, did not grind them into meal, but ate them whole. Castetter (3, p. 47) reports that certain of the Pueblos also boiled the kernels whole. Acorns were widely used as food by various tribes, particularly in the Southwest, the Southeast, and California, and among some Indians in the latter region they were the major food staple.

The roots of several plants were eaten or chewed merely for their flavor. These seem to have been chiefly in the nature of famine foods and food supplements rather than staples. The roots of a

21: Burnet T-5 (1818-1819) 1954 NO6 Comanche)6
Texas

[ca. 1818]

sively uncomfortable in cold or wet weather, and are at best but miserable shelters. The interior furniture consists altogether of the skins of different animals, principally Buffaloe robes, which are spread on the ground, and compose their beds, bedding and all. They use neither chairs, stools, nor tables. In the culinary art they have improved but little upon the most obvious suggestions of nature, and are exceedingly filthy and loathsome in all their household economy. They have no cooking utensils of their own construction, and prefer copper kettles on account of their being easily portable and not subject to fracture. They mostly boil their meat, but sometimes broil it on the coals or roast it on spits. During the summer months they often suffer intensely by hunger, purely from defect of art, and frugality in husbanding their means of subsistence. Whole villages are sometimes three or four days without a particle of animal or vegetables food. Their sufferings are borne in common, and if one hunter is more fortunate than the rest, his game is distributed gratuitously through the whole village. In times of scarcity the men hold it a matter of conscience and pride, to sustain the severest portion of the general privations, and to bear them without murmuring. And indeed they manifest a capacity for enduring abstinence, that would almost lead one to imagine nature had furnished their organic system with a peculiar adaptation to the various contingencies of their existence. When meat is abundant, they gorge and gormandize most voraciously, without experiencing any subsequent inconvenience; and when it is scarce, then endure hunger with singular patience, and comparatively trivial relaxation of the animal functions. Habit is capable of controlling both mind and matter. Being accustomed to pursue their game altogether on horseback, they seldom obtain any other than the Buffaloes, of which they usually have an adequate supply during the cold months, from November to March. They reserve but little from the winter's profusion to supply the scarcity of summer, having no other mode of preventing putrefaction, than by cutting the meat into very thin slices, and exposing it to the sun until it is entirely desicated by exhalation. As you may

31: Jones E-5 (1967-1970) 1972 NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

white man's eyes. Sanapia remembers this point well, for it was she, as her mother's favorite daughter, who was called upon to take her mother to the nearby towns and act as interpreter. 115 159 177 593 191

Lots of times I would be playing or something and I have to go with her . . . speak for her. I tell her, "You can talk English good, why do I have to talk for you?" She just tell me to come on. She said that when the white mans learn Comanche talk, she would learn white man language. She was real stubborn, I guess you would say, about things like that. You know, one time my father put these little napkin rings like they used at school on our table and he told us kids to use them. Well, my mother got them and put bead work on them with each our name on each one. My father got mad at that, but my mother told him that she wasn't no white man, she was Indian. They would talk like that a lot but they stay together till they both dead. They have some run-ins though. Like once I come back from school with these button-top shoes. My mother made me take them off because she said they would cripple my feet. My grandmother told me that too. But my father liked them and made me wear them. I thought they looked good, you know, but they hurt if you wear them long enough. I go barefoot a lot when I was a real young woman. 115 159 177 593

According to Sanapia's memory, her father never took issue with the mother's doctoring activities or her involvement with the peyotists. From Sanapia's stories of childhood it seems that it was the mother who would react violently against the father's attempt to introduce elements of white culture into the home. The father apparently never directly attacked the conservative Comanche ways but preferred to ignore them, withdraw from them, or illustrate how the white man's "road" was superior.

Sanapia's memories of her maternal grandmother are the fondest and most elaborated. It was this grandmother who took the greatest hand in rearing the children, though the father and mother acted as final authorities. It was also this grandmother who continually emphasized to Sanapia the importance of remembering the old ways and old stories, even suggesting that she keep a diary or journal of her life. 115 159 603 177

My grandmother was just a little bitty woman. She stayed in her tepee south of the house because she didn't like houses. She said that they good for keeping dogs and horses and that's all. A lot of old peoples would used to joke like that. She sure was good to me . . . take care of me all the time when I was just a small girl. She wrap me in her blanket when I was little, even when I get to be five years old . . . pretty big girl by then . . . and she carry me around. She said, "I want you to save your feet, don't let your legs get tired because you got a long time to live." She carry me around down on the creek, doing nothing, until I get tired and then she take me back to her tent. She rocks me to sleep and if I wake up way in the night, she would give me a meat ball . . . pound meat with sugar on it. Then she poke up the fire and tell me old stories. She told me how to make real old time Indian bags out of this softest buckskin so I could carry around my own little meat balls in there. Bag looks like a flat bag sort of is the kind of one I had. She tell me always to remember what she tells me and I did. She tell me that I should write it down, but at that time I didn't even know what writing is, but my grandma did. She tell me that a lot of white people would come into our country. That was even before I seen a lot of white [342] 115 159 603 855 [253] [415]

34: Ewers E-4 (no date) 1969 N06 Comanche N06
Texas

 traditional Comanche culture fundamentally changed, owing to the extermination of the buffalo—their staff of life—their pacification by the U.S. Army, and their confinement to a reservation in present-day Oklahoma.

Berlandier was not the first white man to collect artifacts from the Comanche and their neighbors. As early as 1779 Governor Juan Bautista de Anza of New Mexico presented to Teodoro de Croix, Military Commander of the Internal Provinces of New Spain, the war headdresses taken from the bodies of the prominent Comanche war chief, Cuerna Verde (Green Horn),[1] and his second in command, Jumping Eagle, after a battle on September 3, 1779, during which the Spanish decisively defeated Cuerna Verde's Comanche.[2] During the fall of 1807 Lieutenant Zebulon M. Pike, pioneer American explorer of the Southern Plains, sent Thomas Jefferson an Apache quiver and arrows and informed the President that he had "collected a variety of curiosities of various savage tribes through which we passed."[3] Unfortunately, I have found no record of the preservation of these earlier artifacts in public or private collections.

The very great majority of Comanche specimens in the museums of this country and abroad were collected within the Reservation Period—i.e. after 1875. The earlier objects in the Berlandier collection provide a solid base for future studies of trends and developments in the history of Comanche Indian arts and crafts. Even though they number less than 20 specimens, the ones Berlandier collected range from war equipment to costume and containers; they illustrate Comanche skills in featherwork, in dressing animal hides, and in decorating tough rawhide and soft skin surfaces with painted designs and trade beads during the second quarter of the 19th century. And they show the use at that time of trade cloth, rolled metal cones, and brass tacks in decorating articles of Indian make.

Comanche Shields Figures 19–25 Plate 17

The Berlandier collection contains three fine examples of the principle defensive weapon of the Comanche—the rawhide shield—commonly made from the breast of the buffalo, where the hide was thickest. Each shield was furnished with a cover of soft skin which enclosed and protected it when not in use.

In his written description of shields Berlandier makes repeated mention of the Comanche custom of tieing small animal skins to the fronts of the shields as war medicines.[4] The shield pictured in Figure 19 still has fragments of two pocket gophers (of the family Geomyinae) tied to it. Appar-

2. Thomas, 1932, pp. 134–36, 142.

3. Jackson, 1966, vol. 2, pp. 275–76. The quiver and arrows probably were from the Lipan Apache. Two of the arrows were deposited in Peale's Museum in Philadelphia and were entered in their Accession Book under the date May 4, 1808. (Accession Book, Peale's Museum, Dec. 4, 1804–October 1842, in Historical Society of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia.) These arrows were also mentioned in the Philadelphia *Aurora*, July 27, 1808.

4. See pages 54, 91, 116.

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 171]

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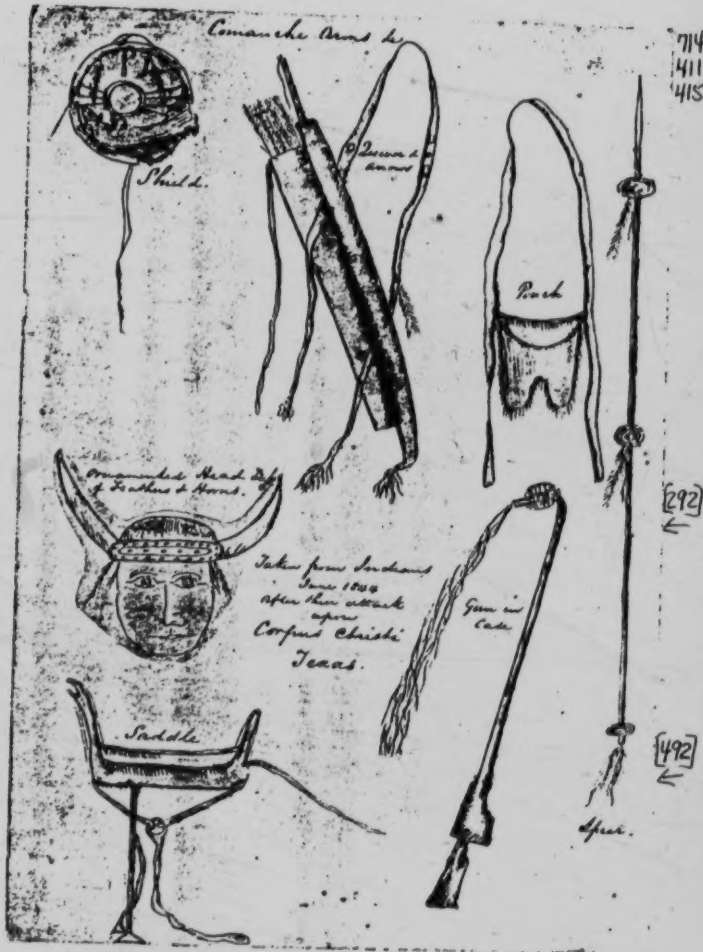

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FIGURE 18. Weapons and equipment captured from a Comanche war party that raided Corpus Christi, Texas, in June 1844. Sketch by William Billaert.

[p.169]

34: Ewers E-4 (no date) 1969 NO6 Comanche NO6
Texas

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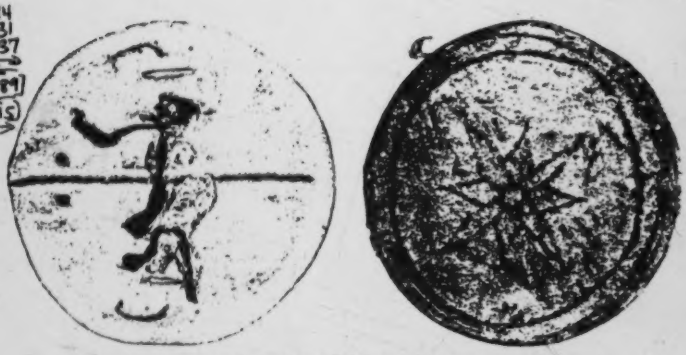

FIGURES 19–20. Comanche shield, with medicines attached, and painted cover. (USNM 4439.)

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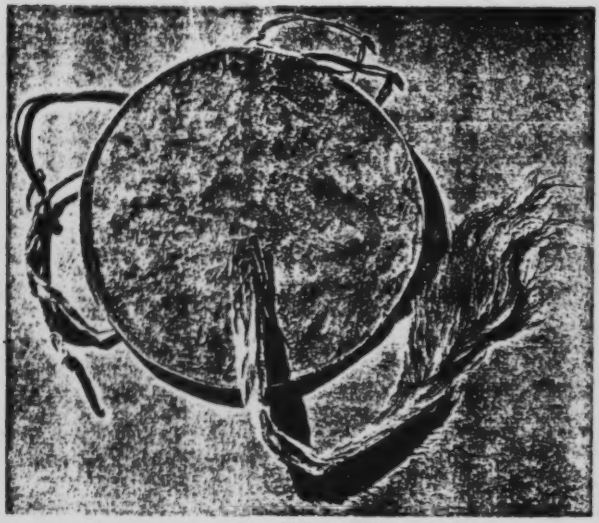

FIGURE 21. Comanche painted shield cover. (Field Museum 6a.579.)

ently the body cavities of these small animals were stuffed with grass before they were tied to the shield. The shield is 59 cm. in diameter and 5 to 6 mm. thick at the edge. Its front surface is further decorated with a painted reddish-brown stripe about 2.5 cm. wide, flanked with white stripes, two small green circles (one above and one below the stripe), and two U-shaped designs in green. The narrow loops of rawhide which pass through the shield surface provide an attachment at the back of the shield for a carrying strap of horsehide 7.5 cm. wide.

This shield is provided with a loosely fitted cover of soft skin, 60 cm. in diameter, which is held in place by a buckskin drawstring that gathers the outer edge of the cover at the back of the shield when pulled tight and tied. This cover is painted in a geometric design composed of a thick black border and an eight-pointed motive outlined in black and filled in with yellow paint (see Figure 20). The latter may be a conventionalized sun symbol.

A second shield base is but 31 cm. in diameter and 4 to 6 mm. thick at the edge. Only its cover is decorated (see Figure 21). A black line encircles the circumference of the cover; black and red concentric circles are painted at the center, and a hoofed mammal with horns—a buffalo or deer?—is painted in black. The tail of a cow, with the hair left on, is tied to the center of the cover as a pendant.[5]

The most elaborately decorated of the three shields is shown in Figures 22 and 23. Its cover (Figure 23) is 53.5 cm. in diameter and bears a conventionalized painting of a bear in black (12 cm. long), a black circle filled with black dots at the center, a black stripe below this, and two black dots to the left of the center. Four small feathers are also tied to the center of the cover. The base of this shield (Figure 22) is 50 cm. in diameter and 5 to 6 mm. thick at the edge. A border of red trade cloth 7 cm. wide is tied at intervals to the outer edge of the shield base. To the inner edge of this cloth are tied 73 pelican feathers as pendants. The trade cloth is decorated with a rectangle of blue pony beads about 7 by 6.5 cm. in size.

The base of this shield (with trade cloth and feather border removed to reveal the shield painting completely) is pictured in color on Plate 18.[A] The large, horned figure in the center may represent either a buffalo or a man (much simplified and conventionalized) wearing a horned headdress. The two monochrome human figures, flanking the central figure, one black and one yellow, are rendered in the same style. Both have featureless rings for heads; short, solid necks; solid, roughly rectangular bodies; and linear ex-

5. This specimen was cat. no. 1470 in the Smithsonian collections but was transferred to the Field Museum, Chicago, in 1901 and is preserved in that museum as cat. no. 62379. Donald Collier, Chief Curator, Department of Anthropology, Field Museum, has kindly supplied photographs and measurements of this specimen.

A [See Plate 17, p. 180—A—Analyst.]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 177]

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FIGURES 22–23. Comanche decorated shield and painted cover. (USNM 4430.)

 tremities. The arms are bent at the elbows and end in three-fingered hands. The straight legs are turned up at their extremities to form feet.

In its rudimentary simplicity the style of human figure represented by this Comanche artist resembles some of the human figures pictured on exposed rock surfaces and in caves of Texas as recorded by archeologists. A. T. Jackson has expressed the opinion that "a few of the historic paintings in West-Central Texas, and perhaps elsewhere, may have been made by the Comanches."[6] The styles of human and animal figures appearing on these three shields are essentially as primitive as are the paintings on rock surfaces and evidence no influence from the white man's artistic traditions.

Black and yellow are the colors most prominently used in these shield paintings. In 1837 Noah Smithwick observed that the Comanche regarded a yellow substance, resembling ochre, as having "power to turn aside any missile which might be directed against a body on which it had been rubbed."[7] The shield paintings were essentially protective designs.

Comanche Quivers Figures 24–25

Two Comanche quivers in the Berlandier collection are pictured in Figures 24 and 25. The first (Figure 24) is of horsehide, 69 cm. long, and decorated with a cut fringe at the back, as well as at the ends of the 5.5 cm. wide rawhide shoulder strap. The second quiver is longer (75 cm.), of horse or deerhide, with a rear extension of buffalo hide, hair inside, about 9 cm. in length. Its rawhide shoulder sling is but 3 cm. wide. Each quiver is fitted with bent wooden spacers which prevent the case from twisting or bending out of shape. Unlike the Comanche specimen illustrated by Bollaert (Figure 18, top center), these quivers are not combined with bow cases. Nor are they made of white wolf hide, which Berlandier learned the Comanche preferred for protecting their weapons because of the strong supernatual powers they attributed to the white wolf.[8]

Comanche Powder Horn Figure 26

Powder horns pictured by Lino Sánchez y Tapia as carried by Lipan, Comanche, Tonkawa, Tawehash, Kickapoo, Koasati, and Karankawa Indians are a dark color, suggesting that they were of buffalo horn.[9] A Comanche powder horn from the Berlandier collection (Figure 26), however, is of domesticated cattle, large numbers of which had reverted to the wild state in Texas before the 1830s. This piece measures 8 cm. in diameter at the base and 2 cm. at the tip. A wooden plug, painted red, has been inserted in the base. Presumably a smaller wooden plug was placed in the tip end to prevent powder from falling out. The horn is decorated

6. Jackson, 1938, p. 463. The same source illustrates a wide variety of conventionalized human figures occurring in pictographs at Texas sites (plates CCLII–CCLXIX), as well as the representation of a buffalo horn headdress painted on the shield of Comanche Jack, which was used by him in raids into Texas prior to 1880 (plate CCXLIII).

7. Smithwick, 1900, p. 191.

8. Berlandier, 1843, p. 180.

9. See Plates 1–6, 11, 14, and 15.

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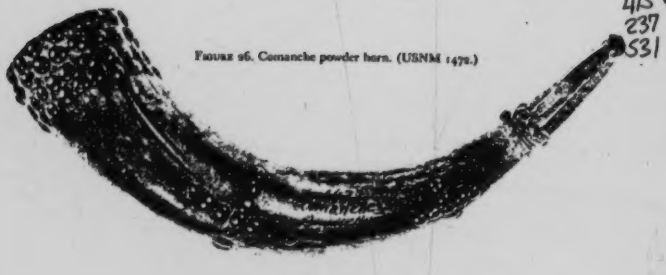

FIGURE 26. Comanche powder horn. (USNM 1472.)

FIGURE 27. Comanche war whistle. (USNM 5564.)

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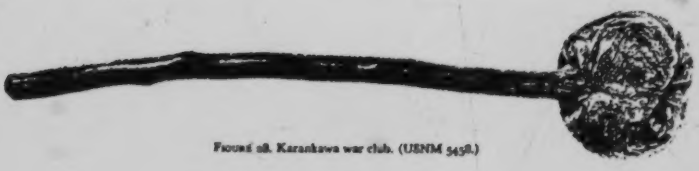

FIGURE 28. Karankawa war club. (USNM 5458.)

[p. 175]

 profusely with brass tacks in four bands near the base end, and two crosses spaced at equal distances of the length of the horn.

Comanche War Whistle Figure 27

Berlandier mentions the Comanche war leader's use of a whistle to blow commands to his followers while in action against the enemy.[10] One of these whistles, collected by Berlandier, is pictured in Figure 27. It is made from the ulna of an eagle and is 19.5 cm. in length. Open at both ends and with a triangular finger stop cut in one side, the whistle is provided with a cord of twisted rawhide for suspension from the leader's neck. While among the Comanche in 1889, shortly after the intertribal wars ended, Ten Kate was told of the former use of an eagle bone whistle to sound signals in battle.[11] George Bird Grinnell describes the Cheyenne use of a bone war whistle.[12] This was not an instrument peculiar to the Comanche.

Karankawa War Club Figure 28

A war club of the Karankawa Indians of the Gulf Coast is made from a single piece of ironwood (Ostrya sp.). The burl forms a head 10 cm. in diameter, and the projecting branch provides a handle 56 cm. in length. Although this club weighs but one pound, ironwood is an exceptionally hard and strong material. This must have made an effective weapon in close combat. The Indian who made this weapon must have shown considerable ingenuity in recognizing the potentiality of this abnormal tree growth as a war club. It is improbable that ironwood burls were typical Karankawa weapons, because they were uncommon in nature.

This club was obtained by John Varden, proprietor of the Washington Museum in the District of Columbia, while he was in New Orleans on a collecting trip in 1838. He recorded the specimen as a "War club of the Crank-a-War Indians of Texas" from a "George W. Chambers." Although Berlandier did not collect this piece, it is contemporaneous with the specimens in his collection. It may be the only war club that has been preserved from the Karankawa, whom Berlandier met in 1829, less than three decades before that tribe became extinct.

Comanche Painted Rawhide Case Plate 18

Women were the painters of geometric designs on parfleches and other rawhide cases among the Plains Indians. A fine example of Comanche women's painting on rawhide appears in Plate 18. This case is made from a single piece of rawhide folded twice to form the front, back, and triangular top flap of the case. When folded the case is nearly square—26 cm. high by 28 cm. wide. The case is laced tightly together at the sides with long narrow strips of rawhide, which also provide decorative fringes, some as long as 48 cm. This form of case was well known among the Blackfoot and neighboring tribes of the Upper Missouri as early as the 1830s and was used to hold sacred objects. The painted designs in green, red, and black on the front of

10. Page 71.
11. Ten Kate, 1885, p. 7.
12. Grinnell, 1962, vol. 1, p. 204.

See p. 180-B—Analyst.

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 178]

178 this Comanche case resemble, however, the geometric painted designs of the Cheyenne more closely than those of the Upper Missouri tribes.[13]

Comanche Beaded Pouch Plate 19

Berlandier termed a beaded pouch of unusual shape in his collection a Comanche "game bag." It appears as Plate 19.[A] William Bollaert, however, pictured a pouch of nearly identical size and shape among the articles taken from the Comanche who attacked Corpus Christi in June 1844. (See Figure 18, upper left.)[B] Perhaps this pouch served for holding medicines or valuable war equipment. The soft skin pouch is 29 cm. wide at the top, and each of the two finger-like projections provides a pocket 25 cm. deep. A series of buckskin tiestrings serves both to hold together the front and back pieces of skin forming the pouch and to provide a decorative fringe. Virtually the entire front of the case is decorated with beadwork in the large or "pony bead" size. The border and two equal-armed crosses are in white, the background in blue beads. The edge of the top flap is decorated with fringe. The beads on this flap are applied in the lazy stitch in three bands: the lower and upper bands are of white and blue "pony beads" while the center band is of the much smaller "sead beads" in white and red.

We know that Spanish officials presented beads to the Indians of Texas during the 18th century and that Dr. Sibley reported Comanche fondness for blue beads in 1807, but this may be one of the earliest examples of Comanche beadwork that has been preserved.[14]

Feathered Headdress Figure 29

A very handsome headdress of a Comanche man is pictured in Figure 29. In form and construction it differs markedly from the more familiar feathered bonnet with beaded browband worn by the Comanche and Indians of many other tribes on dress occasions within the Reservation Period—the headdress that has become the widely recognized symbol of the North American Indian.

This headdress has two major parts, a cap and a trailer of feathers. The cap is fashioned of two pieces of soft-dressed skin of equal size, one forming each side, sewn together with sinew along the vertical midline of the back. It is made to cover the sides, back, and top of the wearer's head but does not extend as far forward as his brow. The lower borders extend to points at the front of each side. The upper part of the cap is covered with red trade cloth, and this, in turn, is decorated with a band of beadwork passing over the top

13. Wissler (1910, pp. 77–78) pictures a side-fringed rawhide case from the Blackfoot and mentions similar cases from the Sarsi, Gros Ventres, Arapaho, and tribes of the Northwestern Plateau in the collections of the American Museum of Natural History.

14. On May 20, 1770, De Mézières requested "two arrobas of beads, white, blue and red" for presents to the chiefs of the Comanche and neighboring tribes, and in 1779 listed 54 pounds of glass beads received for the same purpose. (Bolton, 1914, vol. 2, pp. 201–02, 244.) Dr. Sibley found that the Comanche in 1807 were indifferent to many articles of trade desired by other tribes: "Blue & Red Stroud, Vermillion, Blankets, Blue Beads & knives, are almost the only Articles they Seem Anxious to obtain." (Sibley, 1922, p. 81.)

A [See p. 180-C--Analyst.]
B [See p. 169--Analyst.]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 180]

34: Ewers E-4 (no date) 1969 NO6 Comanche NO6
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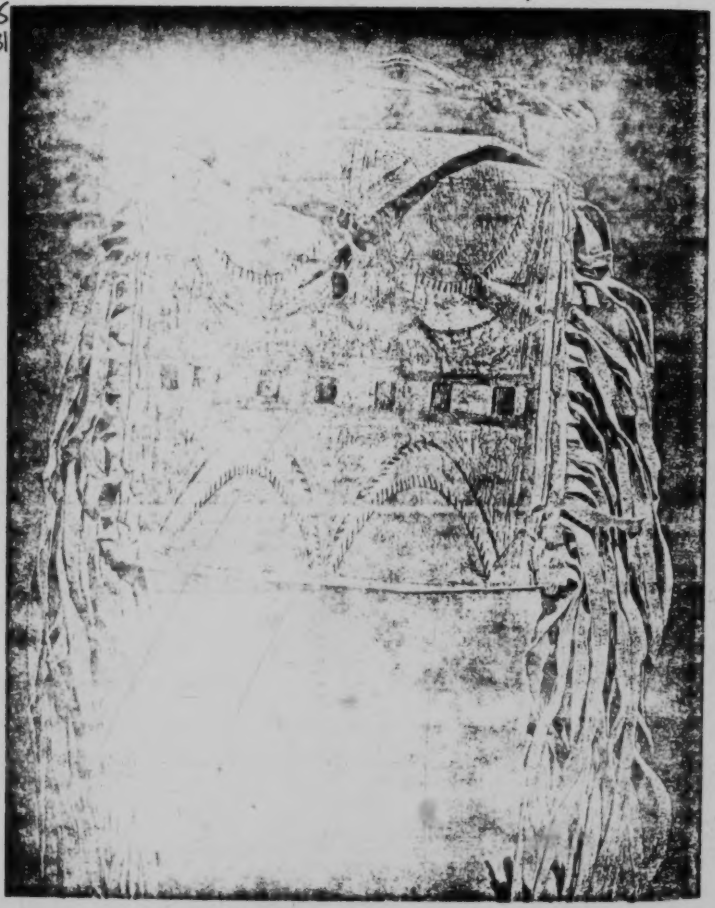

PLATE 18. Comanche painted rawhide case. (Peabody Museum, Salem, Mass., E 3780.)

[p. 180-B]

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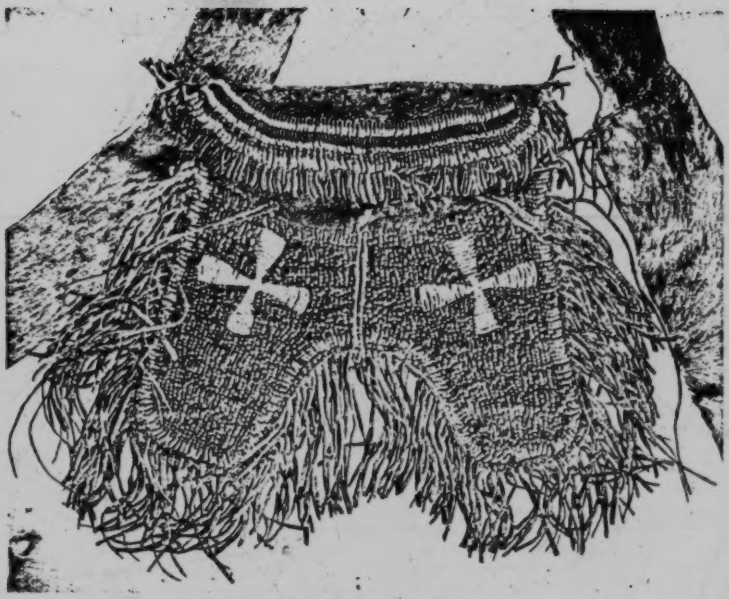

PLATE 19. Comanche beaded pouch. (USNM 1473.)

[p. 180-C]

34: Ewers E-4 (no date) 1969 NO6 Comanche NO6
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FIGURE 54. Comanche horsehide pouch. (USNM 1469)

[P. 182]

34: Ewers E-4 (no date) 1969 N06 Comanche N06
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FIGURE 35. Comanche small beaded pouch. (USNM 1467.)

184 Two longer, complete feathers from a smaller bird are tied to the cord in a similar fashion. Probably this ornament was worn by a Comanche man at the back of the head, with the two longer feathers in an upright position, either as a war medicine or as a dance ornament. The circular ring is 17 cm. in outer diameter; the longest of the two complete feathers is 19 cm. in length.

Another Comanche feather ornament is composed of clipped turkey vulture feathers tied in line to a buckskin cord. (see Figure 31.) The length of this feathered band must originally have been 54 cm., although some feathers toward one end are now fragmentary. There are two buckskin tiestrings at one end, and one at the other. The length of this ornament suggests that it may have been worn as a headband or a neckband.

Comanche Moccasins Figure 32

Although moccasins are probably the most common objects in Plains Indian collections, the pair illustrated in Figure 32 is especially noteworthy as probably the earliest documented example of Comanche footgear, and one of the earliest examples of the hard-soled moccasin from the Great Plains. Each moccasin consists of two pieces, a rawhide hard sole sewn to a soft-skin upper. The upper is a single piece of skin so cut as to furnish the narrow tongue and upturned ankle flap as well as the foot covering. The maximum sole length is 27 cm., and the highest portion of the ankle flap, measuring along the vertical seam at the back, is 10 cm. Each moccasin also has a buckskin tiestring which passes through holes in the upper just forward of the ankle opening, one at each side and one at the center of the back.

Caddoan (?) Moccasins Figure 33

Berlandier does not claim that the moccasins illustrated in Figure 33 are of Comanche origin. They differ basically from the moccasins in Figure 32, each being formed of a single piece of soft dressed skin which provides the sole and covering for the foot as well as the relatively high-topped ankle flaps. These moccasins have no tongues. They are sewn in only two places, up the center back of the heel, and along the midline of the instep from toes to ankle opening, the front portion gathered and puckered over the toes. Each moccasin is 25 cm. long on the bottom of the foot and 17 cm. high at the vertical heel seam. Soft-soled moccasins of this general type had a wide distribution among the Woodland Indian tribes. Dr. Edward Palmer collected a pair of moccasins of this pattern among the Caddo in 1868.[18] The Berlandier specimen may also be of Caddoan origin.

Comanche Horsehide Pouch Figure 34

A Comanche pouch of undetermined use was ingeniously fashioned from the neck and mane of a horse. The mane serves as a decorative pendant to a pouch, roughly 12 cm. square, formed by sewing portions of two sides of the neck together at the sides with sinew. The pouch was carried by a rawhide cord of uneven width, which passed over the user's shoulder and was sewn to the top of each side of the pouch.

18. See Swanton, 1942, plate 13 (top).

415 [531] A small but elaborately decorated pouch from the Comanche (Figure 35) may have served a woman as a container for small toilet articles. Presumably it was worn on dress occasions, supported by the two twisted buckskin cords passed under a woman's belt. Probably the ends of the cords hung free so that the rolled metal cones attached to them would jingle as the woman moved, as would the similar metal jinglers attached to the cut fringes of the top and base of the pouch. The body of the pouch, of reddish-brown buckskin, measures but 8 cm. in height, and 7.5 cm. in its greatest width 415 across the bottom. The vertical seams at each side of the pouch and the tie 531 cords are edged with blue and white seed beads. Even smaller seed beads are used in decorating the front surface of the pouch and flap. Designs on the flap comprise a small rosette with four projecting triangles, and a border band of triangles on a blue ground. Rounded and less precisely defined elements appear in the 1.5 cm. wide beaded horizontal band at the base of the pouch. Bead colors are predominantly the primary ones, red, yellow, and blue, although a few green, pink, and white beads are used. Perhaps the most significant aspects of this pouch historically are its proof that the type occurred on the Southern Plains prior to 1850 and that, even at that early time, small seed beads were employed in its decoration.

Beaded Small Pouch Figure 35

292 [28] [231] A handsome upper garment for a Comanche woman was ingeniously fashioned from a single deerskin (see Figure 36) which measured 106 cm. long by 60 cm. wide in its center dimensions. The basic form of the deerskin has been little altered, even the leg extensions being preserved. A transverse slit in the skin 25 cm. in length provides the hole for the wearer's head and neck, and the garment is draped over her shoulders with the head portion of the skin in front and the tail portion behind. Plate 20 shows a front view of this garment, as worn by Miss Vivian Poolaw, a young Kiowa-Comanche woman from western Oklahoma. Although the center of the hide falls but 52 cm. below the neck opening, the deer legs extend below the wearer's 292 wrists. Primary decoration consists of a blocky reddish-brown painted area 531 extending over the shoulders and down the center both in front and in back. (See Figure 37, showing a back view.) The garment is slightly longer in 292 back (54 cm. on the midline). Note also the long cut fringe at each side which conceals the upper arms and upper forearms, and the much shorter cut fringes on the bottom edges of the garment in front and back. Rolled 292 metal jinglers are attached to a few of the short fringes in front. There is a 531 decorative border of brass tacks around the neck opening and a row of buckskin string pendants about 15 cm. below the neck opening at both front and back. On one of these front strings are strung five large beads, two blue and three red.

Comanche Woman's Upper Garment Plate 20 and Figures 36–37

292 Presumably this handsome garment was worn by a Comanche woman on dress occasions rather than for daily wear, which may account for its difference in construction from the fitted upper garment pictured in Lino Sánchez

[p. 185]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 188]

167: Peters T-5 (1843) 1877 NT13 Navaho NT13
Comanche NO6

I derived, and minutes made at the time, will now only enable me to give you the modus operandi of extracting their dyes, without being able to give you the names of the ingredients. The specimens I had been enabled to collect have become dried up, and many have been lost by crumbling, and I was not enabled to procure seeds or other means of reproducing the plant, and am not sufficiently a botanist to give you a technical description of them. I can give you the facts only, but these are of sufficient importance to awaken curiosity, and lead to the investigations of secrets by those more intimately connected with the subject treated of, and I think of sufficient importance to have that enquiry efficiently made under governmental auspices.

The colors most admired by the Camanches and Navajoes are crimson, blue, purple and green; consequently these colors are the most common among them in all their shades; and though in their weavings they blend these with brown, yellow and other colors, with singular judgment and taste, yet it is the brilliancy of those that you most admire.

All their primitive colors are the products of the prairie and mountain flowers, and their semi-colors are composed of these and the inner bark and roots of but few other plants combined in such proportions as the hue intended to be produced. They have no mineral dyes that I am aware of. Many of these flowers are small, indeed most of them; and the plants of low size, and begin to bloom in February, March and April, and continue till summer. During the blooming, the flowers are gathered early in the morning, with the dew upon them, and dried of the dew under a shade. The leaves are carefully picked off, the stems and such as have their petals covered with pollen of another color —*e. g.*— such as are purple or scarlet with petals of yellow or white pollen, are carefully separated from it. Particular flowers only are selected; all flowers of purple color are not used to dye purple, and so of every other color, but such only as are known to make an indelible dye.

When the desired quantity of leaves are collected they are carefully and cleanly bruised and into them a small quantity of ley (I shall hereafter describe it) is put, but only enough to make

167: Peters T-5 (1843) 1877 NT13 Navaho NT13
Comanche NO6●

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a thick paste — which has the property of loosening the dye from the fabrics, and facilitating its extraction. A small bag shaped like a money purse, and but little larger, made of new dog skin, deer or wolf skin, tanned by the Indians in a manner peculiar to them, is used to compress the juice from the pulp. This bag, a foot or eighteen inches long and three or four inches wide, is half filled with the pulp. Two small handles of wood are stuck through the ends of the bag, about the length of a corkscrew handle, and used to grasp a firm hold, and as levers by which the bag is twisted until the juice is extracted through the pores of the skin, which are very open.

Whether extracted or not for immediate use, the dye is carefully bottled, in glass if it can be procured, or in small bladders, if glass is not to be had. I say small bladders, because if put away in large quantities, the dye sometimes spoils, they say, and produces dingy colors. When put away for future use the light is carefully excluded by overwrapping with skins, or any thing else, and generally buried in the ground under a shelter in which fire is not used, so as to exclude heat. The dyes, however, are generally used soon as extracted, as during the winter the women prepare their best wool, and have it ready in the spring and summer for the process of dying.

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The pulp after compression is put into a small quantity of the same ley above spoken of, and permitted to remain several hours to extract any remaining dye that might be in it, and undergo the same squeezing process until no dye remains.

The ley is made with care of the ashes after burning, of the green wood of a shrub very similar to the *Auralia Spinosa*, if it be not the same of a stunted growth. So careful are they of procuring this ash unadulterated, that they have dry parcels of it laid by with which to ignite the green wood, that the ashes may not be commingled with those of other woods. The ley is usually made in a large gourd, well cleaned and dried, with the butt end cut off, and a small hole bored through the point of the neck to drip from. The gourd is three quarters filled with the ashes considerably compressed in it, and by a bale or handle suspended from a bar containing several of them. Each is then filled with

167: Peters T-5 (1843) 1877 NT13 Navaho NT13
Comanche NO6

rain or pure river water: the point is stopped, and the water allowed to remain on the ashes for a day and night, and then permitted to drip into the vessel placed to catch the ley.

This ley is a little colored, and is clarified by the same process of filtration through clean white sand, or sand that has been used for the same purpose before — when clarified, the ley is used as before stated, and especially to set the colors, which seems to be the principal use of it. It has no caustic quality after filtration, but an astringency peculiar to itself — rather a pungent than burning quality. It is sometimes used to dilute the darker dyes and produce lighter shades.

The wool to be dyed is washed in warm water until perfectly cleansed of the natural oil — using the root of a plant very abundant in Texas and southern New Mexico, as well as most of the southern states, of a very saponaceous quality, and known as the soap plant. In all their best fabrics — blankets, belts, leggings, etc., made of wool, their finest fleeces are used, and it is not unknown to many of our army officers and others, that the Navajoes give great attention to their management of sheep, and often produce fleeces almost or quite equal to the merino in fineness and softness of texture, by their skilful crosses and selections made after long and minute observations and care. A Camanche and Navajoe are as much delighted with the possession of a superior ram and ewe as of a fine horse, to the breeding of which they also give much attention. Von Thaer would not be more so with the possession of his finest buck. All their wool is dyed before spinning, and this is done by submerging it in the dye and letting it remain ten or fifteen days, the dye-pot being left covered: but during this soaking the wool is turned over once every day. Sometimes the lighter shades are imparted to the wool by soaking a shorter time — they say this produces a clearer tint. If not dark enough, the same process is repeated with fresh dye. I have been told by my guide, that the Camanches fumigate the wool after dying, over a smoke of the above described wood, to deepen the color, but I never saw it done.

Their green color is produced from the leaves of several plants, the juice of which is expressed in the same manner as from the flowers, and used in the same manner.